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SPECIFICATION

ARRANGEMENT OF COLOR PIXELS FOR FULL COLOR IMAGING DEVICES WITH SIMPLIFIED ADDRESSING

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field Of The Invention

The present invention relates to color pixel arrangements. Specifically the present invention relates to color pixel arrangements used in electronic imaging devices and displays.

2. The Prior Art

Full color perception is produced in the eye by three-color receptor nerve cell types called cones. The three types are sensitive to different wave lengths of light: long, medium, and short ("red", "green", and "blue" respectively). The relative density of the three differs significantly from one another. There are slightly more red receptors than green. There are very few blue receptors compared to red or green. In addition to the color receptors there are relative wavelength insensitive receptors called rods that contribute to monochrome night vision.

The human vision system processes the information detected by the eye in several perceptual channels; luminance, chrominance, and motion. Motion is only important for flicker threshold to the imaging system designer. The luminance channel takes the input from all of the available receptors, cones and rods. It is "color blind". It processes the information in such a manner that the contrast of edges is enhanced. The chroma channel does not have edge contrast enhancement. Since the luminance channel uses and enhances every receptor, the resolution of the luminance channel is several times higher than the chroma channel. The blue receptor contribution to luminance perception is less than 5%, or one part in twenty. Thus the error introduced by lowering the blue resolution by one octave will be barely noticeable by the most perceptive viewer, if at all, as experiments at NASA, Ames Research Center (R. Martin, J. Gille, J. Larimer, Detectability of Reduced Blue Pixel Count in Projection Displays, SID Digest 1993) have demonstrated.

Color perception is influenced by a process called "assimilation" or the Von Bezold color blending effect. This is what allows separate color pixels (called "subpixels" by some authors) of a display to be perceived as the mixed color. This blending effect happens over a given angular distance in the field of view. Because of the relatively scarce blue receptors this blending happens over a greater angle for blue than for red or green. This distance is approximately 0.25° for blue, while for red or green it is approximately 0.12° . At a viewing distance of twelve inches, 0.25° subtends

50 mils (1,270 μ) on a display. Thus, if the blue pixel pitch is less than half (625 μ) of this blending pitch, the colors will blend without loss of picture quality.

The present state of the art color single plane imaging matrix, for flat panel displays and solid state camera chips is the RGB color triad. The system takes advantage of the Von Bezold effect by separating the three colors and placing equal spatial frequency weight on each color. Two manufacturers have shown improvements in display design by using dual or triple panels whose images are superimposed. One manufacturer of projection displays used three panels, red, green, and blue. The blue panel uses reduced resolution in accordance with the match between human vision requirements and the displayed image. Another manufacturer, Planar Systems of Beaverton, Oregon employs a "Multi-row Addressing" technique having a dual electroluminescent panel, one panel with red and green pixels, the other with blue pixels to build a developmental model. The blue pixels have reduced resolution in the vertical axis only. This allows the blue phosphors to be excited at a higher rate than the red and green pixels, thus overcoming a problem with lower blue phosphor brightness. The problem with the prior art is that in providing the same matched resolution balance between human vision and display, additional display panels/planes are used, along with additional driver electronics.

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Ins a 1) Other display methods such as disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 6,008,868 issued Dec. 28, 1999 to Silverbrook use binary controlled emitters. In using binary controlled

emitters, each emitter has a discrete luminance value, therefore, requiring the display to have an exact area to luminance relationship. This prior art used reduced blue "bit depth" built into the panel in accordance with human vision's lower blue color space increments. Conventional display methods also use a single color in a vertical stripe. Since conventional stripes have limited the Modulation Transfer Function (MTF), high spatial frequency resolution, in the horizontal axis, stripes of a single color are non-optimal.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

According to one aspect of the invention a three-color pixel element of spaced-apart emitters is disclosed. The pixel element consists of a blue emitter disposed at the center of a pair of opposing red and a pair of opposing green emitters. The plurality of pixel elements may be arranged in rows and columns to form a display. This array provides better perceived resolution and appearance of single full color displays by matching the human vision system.

According to another aspect of the invention, the drive matrix for the pixel array is disclosed. While the array consists of a plurality of rows and columns of the three-color pixel element of the present invention, the drive matrix consists of a plurality of row and column drivers to drive the individual emitters. The row drivers drive the red, green and blue emitters in each row, and the red and green emitters in each column are driven by a single column driver. However, a single column driver drives two columns of blue

emitters. Thus, the number of drive lines and associated driver electronics used in the prior art are reduced in the present invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIGS. 1a and 1b are arrangements of a three-color pixel element of the present invention.

FIG. 2 is an array of three-color pixel elements of the present invention.

FIG. 3a is an arrangement of two three-color pixel elements of the present invention, aligned horizontally.

FIG. 3b is a diagram showing an illustrative drive matrix for the pixel arrangement of FIG. 3a according to the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF A PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

Those of ordinary skill in the art will realize that the following description of the present invention is illustrative only and not in any way limiting. Other embodiments of the invention will readily suggest themselves to such skilled persons.

FIG. 1a shows an illustrative embodiment of an arrangement of a three-color pixel element 10 according to the present invention. The pixel element consists of a blue emitter 12, two red emitters 14, and two green emitters 16. The blue emitter 12 is disposed at the origin of a rectangular coordinate system having four quadrants, and the pair of red emitters 14, and the pair of green emitters 16 are disposed at opposing

quadrants of the rectangular coordinate system. As shown in FIG. 1a, the blue emitter 12 is square shaped, having corners aligned at the x and y axes of the rectangular coordinate system, and the opposing pairs of red 14 and green 16 emitters are generally square shaped, having truncated inwardly-facing corners forming edges parallel to the sides of the blue emitter 12.

Another illustrative embodiment of a three-color pixel element 20 according to the present invention is shown in FIG. 1b. In this embodiment, a blue emitter 22 is square shaped having sides aligned parallel to the x and y axes of a rectangular coordinate system, while the opposing pairs of red 24 and green 26 emitters are L-shaped. The L-shaped emitters envelop the blue emitter having the inside corners of the L-shaped emitters aligned with the corners of the blue emitter.

According to a preferred embodiment of the present invention, the pixel has equal red, green and blue emitter area. This may be achieved by placing in the center of the pixel a blue emitter having an area larger than the areas of the individual red and green emitters. Those of ordinary skill in the art will recognize that, in other embodiment of the present invention, the area of the blue emitter may be smaller in relation to either the red or green emitters. The blue emitter may be brighter than either the red or green emitters, or it may be the same brightness as the red and green emitters. For example, the drive-to-luminance gain of the blue emitter may be greater than that of the red or green emitters.

Although the above description is illustrative of a preferred embodiment of the present invention, those of ordinary skill in the art will readily recognize other alternatives. For example, the emitters may have different shapes, such as rounded or polygonal. They may also be diffuse rather than having sharp edges. The pixels need not
 5 be arranged with equal spatial frequency in each axis. The aperture ratio between the emitters may be minimized to substantially non-existent or it may be very pronounced, and the space may also be different colors, including black or white. The emitters may be any technology known or invented in the future, such as displays using Liquid Crystal (LCD), Plasma, Thin Film Electroluminescent, Discrete Light Emitting Diode (LED), Polymer Light Emitting Diode, Electro-Chromic, Electro-Mechanical, Incandescent Bulb, or Field Emission excited phosphor (FED).

FIG. 2 is an array 30 of the three-color pixel element 10 of FIG. 1a. The array 30 is repeated across a panel or chip to complete a device with a desired matrix resolution. The repeating three-color pixels 10 form a "checker board" of alternating red 32 and green 34 emitters with blue emitters 36 distributed evenly across the device, but at half the resolution of the red 32 and green 34 emitters.

In s a27 One advantage of the three-color pixel element array of the present invention is
 20 improved resolution of color displays. This occurs since only the red and green emitters contribute significantly to the perception of high resolution in the luminance channel.

Thus reducing the number of blue pixels and replacing some with red and green pixels improves resolution by more closely matching human vision.

Dividing the red and green emitters in half in the vertical axis to increase spatial addressability is an improvement over the conventional vertical single color stripe of the prior art. An alternating "checkerboard" of red and green emitters allows the Modulation Transfer Function (MTF), high spatial frequency resolution, to increase in both the horizontal and the vertical axes.

The three-color pixel element array may also be used in solid state image capture devices found in modern consumer video cameras and electronic still cameras. An advantage of using the reduced blue emitter resolution in both image capture and display is that stored images do not need to supply the same resolution for each color in storage or processing. This presents potential savings during coding, compression, and decompression of electronically stored images, including software and hardware in electronic imaging and display systems such as computers, video games, and television, including High Definition Television (HDTV) recording, playback, broadcasting, and display.

FIG. 3a is an arrangement 40 of two three-color pixel elements of the present invention aligned horizontally. A blue emitter 42a is disposed at the origin of a first three-color pixel element, and a blue emitter 42b is disposed at the origin of a second three-

color pixel element. Red emitters 44a and 44b are disposed in the upper left corners of the first and second pixel elements. Green emitters 46a and 46b are disposed in the lower left corners of the first pixel and second pixel elements. Red emitters 48a and 48b are disposed in the upper right corners of each pixel element, and green emitters 50a and 50b are disposed in the lower right corners of each pixel element.

FIG. 3b is a diagram of an illustrative drive matrix 60, according to the present invention, for the pixel arrangement 40. The emitters are schematically represented as capacitors for convenience. The emitters of the invention may be active electronic devices such as Thin Film Transistors (TFT) found in Active Matrix Liquid Crystal Display (AMLCD), or Charge Coupled Devices as found in camera chips, or other suitable devices.

The illustrative drive matrix 60 shown in FIG. 3b consists of a 2 X 5 drive matrix, where four column drivers drive the red and green emitters and a single column driver drives the blue emitters. A first column driver 62 drives the red emitter 44a and the green emitter 46a. The blue emitters 42a and 42b are tied together and driven by a second column driver 64. A third column driver 66 drives the green emitter 48a and the red emitter 50a, while a fourth column driver 68 drives the red emitter 44b and the green emitter 46b. The green emitter 48b and the red emitter 50b are driven by a fifth column driver 70.

The row drivers of the present invention drive the red, green and blue emitters in each row. Row driver 72 drives red emitters 44a and 44b, green emitters 48a and 48b, as well as blue emitter 42b. Row driver 74 drives green emitters 46a and 46b, red emitters 50a and 50b and blue emitter 42a. Each emitter can be driven at continuous luminance values at specific locations in a pixel, unlike emitters in the prior art, which are driven at discrete luminance values at random locations in a pixel.

In s a 47 The drive matrix disclosed in the present invention uses approximately 16% fewer column drivers to present a given image than does a prior art 2 X 6 drive matrix for the triad arrangement. The column drive lines are reduced since the blue emitters 16 are combined. This entire arrangement can be turned 90 degrees such that the combined blue emitters 16 are driven by the same row driver. All such topologically identical variants known in the art are possible embodiments of this invention. In addition, the driver type, voltage, and timing can be the same as already known in the art for each device technology.

While embodiments and applications of this invention have been shown and described, it would be apparent to those skilled in the art that many more modifications than mentioned above are possible without departing from the inventive concepts herein.

The invention, therefore, is not to be restricted except in the spirit of the appended claims.